

RIDE SAFE

CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY PROGRAM



The Indian Health Service (IHS) developed Ride Safe to help tribal communities address motor vehicle injuries among American Indian and Alaskan Native children. Specifically, Ride Safe aims to reduce the rate of motor vehicle related injuries to children, aged 3 to 5 years, enrolled in participating Tribal Head Start programs, by promoting motor vehicle child restraint use. The Ride Safe Program training module includes eight guides; each guide includes activities for a specific group within the Tribal community.

BACKGROUND

Motor vehicle crashes (MVCs) are the leading cause of death for American Indians/Alaska Natives (AI/AN) ages 1-44. Tragically, MVC injuries and deaths disproportionately affect the youngest members of the community and their families. MVCs are the leading cause of death among American Indians/Alaskan Natives (AI/AN) children ages 1-9. Individuals that would one day grow up to be future community leaders and parents often don't get the chance to take their place in the community. These losses are even more tragic because the majority of severe MVC injuries and deaths could be prevented through the use of a child safety seat or seatbelt.

When parents and childcare providers use appropriate occupant restraints while transporting their child in a vehicle, the chances of their child surviving a car crash improves. Unfortunately, on-going observational surveys in AI/AN communities suggest that seatbelt and child safety seat usage rates on most Tribal Reservations are very low.

Some of the common reasons parents do not use child safety seats include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Use of occupant restraints (child safety seats and seatbelts) is not mandated by state or tribal law.
- Adult family members don't use vehicle restraints.
- Families cannot afford child safety seats.
- Children are resistant to being placed in a child safety seat.
- Child safety seats are difficult to use.
- Short trips aren't perceived as being hazardous.
- Selected vehicle restraint systems are incompatible with booster seats

Most of these factors were cited in a local focus group and noted in Child Passenger Safety literature.

The **Ride Safe** Program will achieve its overall goal by meeting the following objectives:

1. Provide funding and support for at least one Tribal Head Start Center staff member to complete the National Highway Traffic (NHTSA) Child Passenger Safety (CPS) technician training.
2. Provide a one to two-day CPS training for all Head Start staff who participate in Ride Safe activities.
3. Educate parents and childcare providers about proper and age-appropriate child restraint use.
4. Distribute to parents and care givers one car seat or booster seat for each child at a Head Start Center that implements the Ride Safe Program.
5. Conduct follow-up home visits to educate parents and other caregivers about proper car seat use and to reinforce positive child passenger safety messages.
6. Gather community child restraint use data.
7. Promote community awareness about how to lessen the severity of motor vehicle crash injuries through car seat use.

The Ride Safe Program was designed to meet Head Start Performance Standards 1304.22(d)(1)&(2) for Injury Prevention and 1304.40(a)(1), and 1304.41(a)(1)(2) for collaborative partnership-building:

1. Ensure that staff and volunteers can demonstrate CPS skills properly to parents and childcare providers
2. Foster CPS awareness among children and childcare providers by incorporating it into activities;
3. Engage in a collaborative partnership with other government and non-government groups to conduct CPS training and activities.

During this second year, eleven tribal Head Start programs are participating in the Ride Safe project. For more information on the Ride Safe program, please contact Chris.Allen@mail.ihs.gov.